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Michigan in the War of 1812

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# Michigan in the War of 1812

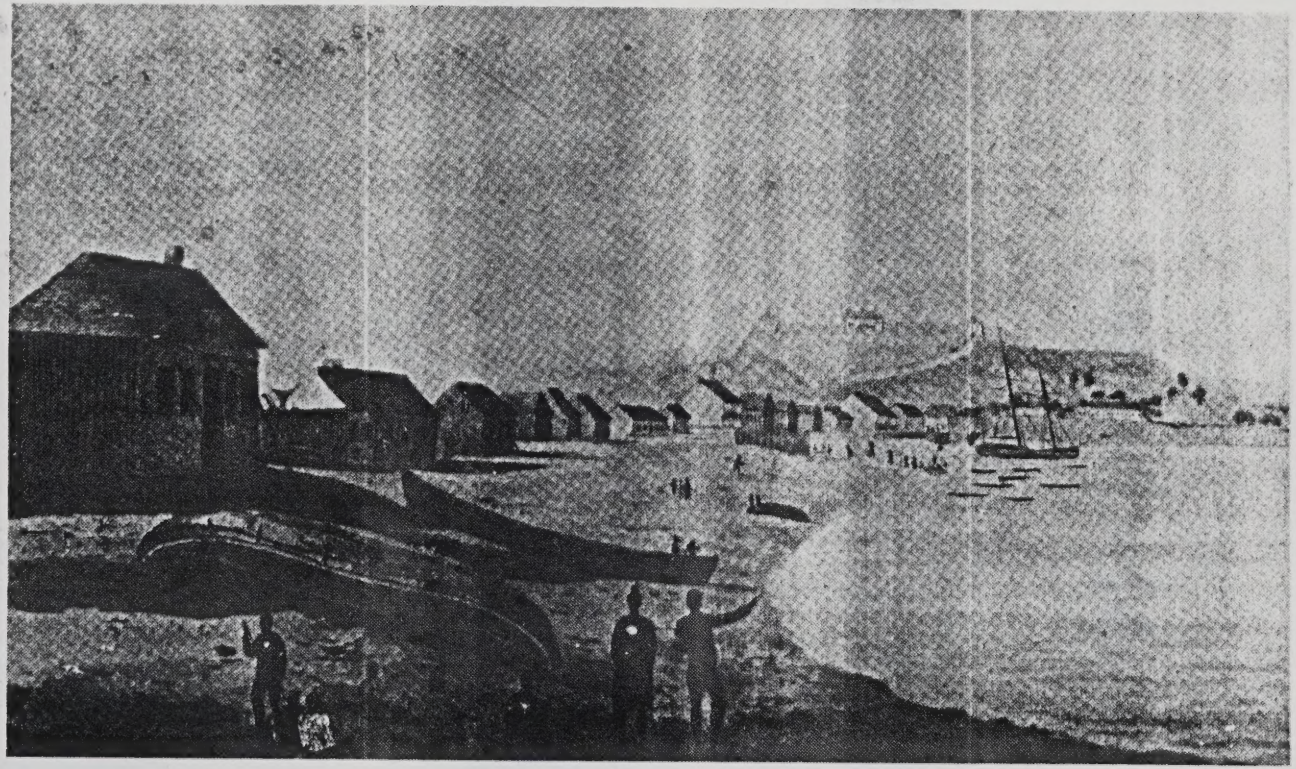
by

Fred C. Hamil

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE

COVER: Oliver H. Perry

# Michigan in the War of 1812



*Courtesy McCord Museum, McGill University*

MICHILIMACKINAC—A sketch by Richard Dillon, Jr., and published in Montreal in 1813, the year after the capture of Fort Mackinac by the British.

# Michigan in the War of 1812

by

Fred C. Hamil

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A John M. Munson Michigan History Fund Publication

Pamphlet No. 4

MICHIGAN HISTORY DIVISION
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING 1977

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Dr. Hamil's article appeared originally in the September, 1960, issue of *Michigan History*

First printing, September, 1960
Second printing, July, 1967
Third printing, 1977

# PREFACE

THE JOHN M. MUNSON MICHIGAN HISTORY FUND is now twenty-six years old. For more than a quarter of a century the Fund has produced quality publications on Michigan's past. In 1954, *Michigan in Four Centuries* by Dr. F. Clever Bald was completed with financial support from the Munson Fund. Published by Harper and Brothers, Dr. Bald's account of Michigan growth and development has been widely used and enjoyed. A four volume history of education in Michigan was the next production supported by the Fund. In it, readers can follow the growth of education in the State and gain some appreciation of Michigan's contribution to the American educational system.

To supplement these two major publications, the Fund has also produced a wide variety of material to aid the teacher of Michigan History. This material has included a teacher's guide to Michigan history and course outlines. A series of filmstrips dealing with lumbering, Great Lakes transportation, iron mining, the Civil War and highways has given teachers an additional classroom tool in the teaching of Michigan History. In addition to all this, the Michigan Historical Commission, in 1960, began a pamphlet series to further supplement existing materials. In the last sixteen years the series has presented a number of readable, compact and authoritative accounts on important aspects of the State's past. The pamphlets have been designed for use by teachers and students but have also been popular with the general reader interested in Michigan History.

Since 1960, the pamphlets have sold steadily and most of them have been reprinted several times. This publication, on Michigan's part in the War of 1812, has been reprinted once and we gladly reissue it for a second time. The late Fred C. Hamil who authored this booklet was a native Canadian and a graduate of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He later did graduate work at Columbia University and the University of Michigan, where he received his Ph.D. in 1933. A long-time member of the faculty at Wayne State University, Dr. Hamil died in 1968.

MARTHA M. BIGELOW
*Director*
Michigan History Division

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# Michigan in the War of 1812

*Fred C. Hamil*

## CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF THE WAR

THE WAR OF 1812 WAS THE LAST STAGE in a century-long conflict for possession of the North American continent. Land-hungry English colonists had spread westward from the Atlantic Coast to the Alleghenies, dispossessing the natives and destroying the forest on which their way of life depended. The French, on the other hand, developed a commercial empire based on furs, which made use of the services of the Indians and preserved their wilderness economy. From Quebec and Montreal the French quickly penetrated to the center of the continent, encircling the English with a tenuous line of strategic forts and trading posts on the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. After 1760 Great Britain took the place of France in the exploitation of the empire of the St. Lawrence; British traders joined with French-Canadians to carry on the fur trade. The country north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi remained part of a vast Indian preserve from which white settlers were excluded. In 1774 it was annexed to the Province of Quebec, and seemed lost forever to Great Britain's colonies along the Atlantic Coast.

The Treaty of Paris in 1783, which ended the American War of Independence, unexpectedly ceded this region to the United States. The British then sought to avoid the consequences of their betrayal of the interests of the Indians and the Canadian fur traders. They refused to give up the posts at Detroit, Michilimackinac, and Niagara. The Indians indignantly refused to recognize the peace or the cession of their hunting grounds. For nearly a dozen years they fought a savage war against the encroaching settlers and the American armies. It was not until 1794 that General Anthony Wayne was able to inflict a decisive defeat on them in what is now Ohio at Fallen Timbers, on the lower Maumee River. The following year, at Greenville, the Indians ceded to Congress extensive areas of land, including most of the present state of Ohio. Only then did the

British agree to give up Detroit and the other western posts. This agreement was carried out in 1796.

Peace did not long remain. The continued loss of the Indians' hunting grounds, too often by sham treaties, and the gross disregard of their most elementary human rights, inflamed their hostility anew. Their cause seemed hopeless, until the brilliant Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, with his brother, the Prophet, began in 1809 to weld the tribes east of the Mississippi into a confederacy. These men preached a doctrine of moral reform, separation from the whites, and preservation of the remaining Indian lands. In the region between the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Great Lakes, the Indians' strength had been reduced to some four thousand warriors in scattered tribes. Opposed to them in the Ohio Valley and to the south were fifty times that number of white men of fighting age.

In spite of Tecumseh's assurances that the confederacy was purely defensive, Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory took alarm. Collecting a large army, in November, 1811, he marched up the Wabash River to the Prophet's headquarters at the mouth of Tippecanoe Creek. A fierce battle, costly to both sides, ended with the defeat of the Indians and the destruction of their village. Tecumseh, who had been absent in the south on the business of the confederacy, soon withdrew to Canada with his warriors, to become a potent force against the Americans in the War of 1812. The belief that the British authorities were behind the confederacy and had provided the Indians with arms convinced many Americans that the only safety for the West lay in driving the British from the continent. The restless American frontiersmen were already gazing with greedy eyes on the rich and empty lands of Upper Canada. Hatred and fear of the British, combined with a desire for personal gain, caused a widespread clamor for war.

In the meantime events upon the sea had been the ostensible cause of bringing the United States to the point of breaking relations with Great Britain. A long series of incidents, arising out of the life and death struggle between Great Britain and Napoleonic France, led to this result. Both powers disregarded the rights of neutrals in their efforts to blockade each other, but Britain had command of the seas, and her interference with neutral trade was more effective. She exercised her asserted right to stop and search

TECUMSEH—From contemporary sketches showing him in the dress of a British brigadier-general.

*From Benson J. Lossing,* Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812 (*New York, 1869*).

American ships, and to impress American seamen alleged to be British deserters. Following the attack by the *Leopard* on the American frigate *Chesapeake,* in June, 1807, in which American blood was shed, President Thomas Jefferson placed an embargo on American ships leaving for foreign ports. This policy was continued with the Nonintercourse Act of 1809, but it was ended the following year because of the injury to American trade. An offer was then made to resume nonintercourse with either France or Great Britain, provided the other would revoke its blockade decrees.

The elections of 1810-11 brought to Congress a number of young men from the West and South, among them Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, who gained the name of the "War Hawks." The destiny of the United States was to extend its territories to the North Pole, they declared; and they boasted that Canada could be conquered in six weeks. Joining with others to secure the Speaker's chair for Henry Clay, these men gained control over the appointment of a number of committees, the most important being that on foreign affairs. When Napoleon's government made an empty gesture towards revoking its blockade decrees President James Madison accepted it at face value. The War Hawks demanded war against Great Britain. Their loud defense of neutral rights and freedom of the seas did not hide their real objective — the conquest of Canada. It was the congressmen from Vermont, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Carolina who voted, almost unanimously, for war. A majority of those from New England, New York, and New Jersey voted against war; the maritime sections of New England, most affected by impressment and blockades, were unanimously for peace. The British government announced on June 16, 1812, its decision to lift its blockade, but it was too late. The American declaration of war was signed by Madison on June 18.

On the eve of the conflict there were about 90,000 inhabitants in the Province of Upper Canada (now Ontario). Most of them were scattered along the St. Lawrence and the northern shores of the Great Lakes from Montreal to Lake St. Clair. Even along this line there were extensive areas of unbroken forest on Lake Ontario east of York (Toronto), and along the western half of the Lake Erie shore. Settlement had also spread up the Thames River for a few miles beyond the site of Chatham. This stream was part of an

interior line of communication leading from Detroit to the head of Lake Ontario. A few miles above Chatham the river became too shallow for anything larger than a canoe; and wheeled vehicles could not traverse the forty miles of forest that separated Moraviantown, at the end of the lower Thames settlements, from Delaware, whence a road led to Burlington Bay on Lake Ontario. Colonel Thomas Talbot's settlers were opening a road along Lake Erie westward from Long Point, but it stopped short some hundred miles east of the Detroit River. Such roads as existed were almost impassable except when dry in summer or frozen in winter. The Great Lakes system provided the only highway for the rapid movement of men and supplies in any quantity. It was the key to the control of Upper Canada, Michigan, and the Far West.

Michigan had at this time less than five thousand settlers, four-fifths of them French-Canadians. The great majority lived along the Detroit River. The rest of the territory was covered with a forest as dense as that of Upper Canada, broken only occasionally by an isolated trading post on a lake or river. The one road that was anything more than a trail lay along the Detroit River and the western end of Lake Erie. Below the Maumee River (then called the Miami) the Black Swamp, some forty miles in width, stretched from the Sandusky River on the east to the Indiana line on the west. In the summer of 1812 General William Hull had to cut a road through this swamp in order to bring his army from Ohio to Detroit. Throughout the Ohio Valley the roads were little better than those in Upper Canada.

British naval power on the Great Lakes was somewhat superior to that of the United States. As long as this superiority was held and the life line to Great Britain was not cut, Upper Canada might feel fairly secure. But within her borders were thousands of recent American settlers of doubtful loyalty, most of whom were at least sympathetic to the United States. The United Empire Loyalists (the Tories of the War of Independence) and the British immigrants could be depended on, but they were comparatively few in numbers, and the militia lacked training. Except for Tecumseh's warriors, most of the Indians would support whichever appeared to be the winning side. Less than 4,500 British regular troops guarded the Canadas, and two-thirds of them were stationed in the lower prov-

ince (now Quebec). In this province the authorities were very uneasy, unjustifiably as events were to show, about the loyalty of the large French population. Sir George Prevost, Governor-General of British North America who also governed Lower Canada directly, proved to be lacking in nerve and resolution.

On the other hand, Upper Canada had invaluable assets in the persons of Major-General Isaac Brock, the administrator of the civil government, and Tecumseh. Both were brave, intelligent, and experienced commanders. As war neared, Brock laid plans to remain on the defensive at Niagara, Kingston, and the upper St. Lawrence, while using Fort Malden at Amherstburg as a base for the capture of the American posts at Michilimackinac and Detroit. Possession of these forts, he saw, would secure the cooperation of the western Indian tribes, insure control of the fur trade, and strengthen British command of the lakes. Failure to take them might force him to evacuate Amherstburg, and possibly the whole country as far east as Kingston or even Montreal.

Until Napoleon's defeat in 1814 England could send no more than a handful of additional troops to Canada. The population of the United States was about 7,250,000; that of all the British North American provinces combined, less than 500,000. A determined attack on Montreal, at the head of ocean navigation — the limit to which British sea power could reach — might succeed in cutting the life line to Upper Canada. That province could then be conquered at leisure, or left to fall like ripe fruit.

With proper foresight the American government would have strengthened its positions at Michilimackinac, Detroit, and Niagara before the declaration of war; and it would have remained on the defensive there. It had the advantage of a well-developed route by way of the Hudson River, Albany, and Lake Champlain, for the attack on Montreal, which should have been the main objective. At the same time, Kingston could be threatened by the Mohawk River-Lake Oneida route from Albany. But incompetent leadership and ill-laid plans spelled disaster for American arms. Nothing was done to increase the inadequate garrison and supplies at Michilimackinac. The decision was made to move simultaneously against the Canadian frontiers at Detroit, Niagara, and Montreal. Major-General Henry Dearborn was put in command of the northern

MICHIGAN IN THE WAR OF 1812

region from Niagara eastward, with direct control of the operations against Montreal. Brigadier-General William Hull, governor of the Michigan Territory, was given command of the northwestern frontier centering round Detroit. Both were aging veterans who had served in the War of Independence in subordinate positions.

The United States was divided and unprepared for war. The New England states were definitely opposed to it, and to any alliance with Napoleon. They contributed little in money or men to the war, and continued to trade with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick almost as though they were neutral countries. The brunt of the fighting was borne by the militiamen of the inland and western states, who were poorly trained and poorly disciplined. Many of them held to the letter of the law and refused to serve outside the limits of the United States. The regular army had recently been reduced to less than seven thousand men, despite the threat of war, and it was difficult to obtain recruits for it. Most men preferred the shorter terms and freer discipline of the militia.

## GENERAL WILLIAM HULL AND THE CAMPAIGN OF 1812

General William Hull's lack of fitness for high military command was amply demonstrated during his conduct of the Detroit campaign. But he was not without awareness of the strategic importance of Detroit in the contest for the support of the Indians of the Old Northwest; and he saw clearly that British naval superiority on Lake Erie posed a threat to the lines of communication between that post and the settled parts of Ohio, whence must come most of the men and supplies for its defense. Certainly no invasion of Upper Canada could be made from Detroit with the object of advancing eastward to join another invading army from Niagara without control of Lake Erie. Such was his opinion when Secretary of War William Eustis asked him to assume the command of the army on the northwestern front in the spring of 1812. A little later, however, the objections of his superiors led him to abandon this position. Against his better judgment he took the way that led to disaster and disgrace.

Hull arrived at Dayton, Ohio, on May 25, 1812, to take command

WILLIAM HULL

*From Lossing,* Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812.

of three militia regiments comprising fifteen hundred men, which Governor Return Jonathan Meigs had assembled at the request of President Madison for the defense of Detroit. The regiments were led by Colonels James Findlay, Duncan McArthur, and Lewis Cass, audacious men who were soon at odds with their indecisive commander. On June 10, the army moved up to Urbana, where it was joined by Lieutenant-Colonel James Miller and five hundred regulars of the Fourth United States Infantry from Vincennes. Five days later Hull began the difficult march of two hundred miles through the wilderness to Detroit. The great Black Swamp barred the way, but the men began to cut a road through the tangled mass of trees and underbrush, building bridges and causeways where necessary for the advance of the heavy baggage train. Two weeks after it set out the army reached the Rapids of the Maumee, sixty miles below Detroit and southwest of present-day Toledo.

News of the declaration of war had not yet reached Hull, although he must have known it was imminent, and he welcomed the chance to send on his baggage and medical stores, along with the sick and some of the officers' wives, in the schooner *Cuyahoga*, which happened to be in the Maumee River. Unknown to him his official papers, with information concerning the American plans and the size of his force, were also put on board. The *Cuyahoga* was captured by the British off Fort Malden, where the commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas St. George, had been notified of the outbreak of war on June 27. Hull only heard the news on July 2 when he reached Frenchtown (now Monroe) at the mouth of the River Raisin. Here a messenger from the Cleveland post office overtook him with a letter from the War Department.

On July 5, the American army arrived at Springwells, just below Detroit, to the sound of gunfire directed by the Americans from Fort Detroit against the enemy across the river. The next day it moved up to the town. With the garrison there, consisting of a company of the First United States Infantry, and a detachment of volunteer Michigan militia, Hull now commanded a force of not more than twenty-two hundred men. Many of his original troops had been left as garrisons at the blockhouses built along the way to guard his communications between Urbana and the Maumee. Hull's authority extended over Fort Michilimackinac to the north, Fort

Dearborn at Chicago, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, but he was unable to keep in effective touch with these distant posts, or to give them any assistance.

Three days after his arrival at Detroit, Hull received a letter from the Secretary of War giving him discretionary orders to attack Fort Malden. He was warned, however, that he could not expect support from an early advance on the Niagara frontier. Under pressure from his zealous militia officers he decided to cross the river into Canada, in spite of British naval control and the lack of carriages for the cannon he believed necessary for the assault on Malden. Without artillery the assault would have been costly, and the undisciplined militiamen might not have been equal to it. But Colonel St. George had less than three hundred British regulars under his command, besides some six hundred militiamen and at least as many Indians under Tecumseh. With this force, and with the fortifications in disrepair, neither St. George nor General Isaac Brock had much hope of preventing the fall of Malden.

Working feverishly to strengthen the fort, to collect and arm an additional company of militia from the outlying settlements, and to round up cattle and other supplies, St. George was playing for time. To make some show of opposition to an enemy crossing he had sent up the militia under Colonel James Baby to Sandwich (Windsor). On July 5, while building gun emplacements opposite Detroit, the men were thrown into confusion by shots fired from two twenty-four pounders located on the American bank of the river. News then came that Hull's army had arrived at Springwells. Baby began a withdrawal to Amherstburg, but was stopped a few miles away by a detachment of regulars, which prevailed upon him to return. But on July 11, having learned that Hull was about to cross the river, St. George ordered the militia back to Malden.

In the darkness of early morning on July 12, the American army crossed the Detroit River below Belle Isle without opposition. Hull established his headquarters at Sandwich, in a new brick house belonging to Colonel Baby. Until Malden could be taken, any advance inland was an impossibility, and the position of the invading army remained precarious from the vulnerability of its supply lines. Hull decided to wait at Sandwich until carpenters completed carriages for the heavy artillery; and in the meantime to attempt to

weaken the British position by winning over the local inhabitants. For this purpose he issued a bombastic proclamation offering protection for all who should take the oath of neutrality, and death and destruction for those who should resist. This had a considerable effect on the people; and many of the militiamen, fearful for the safety of their families and anxious to harvest their wheat, left their posts and returned home. Many took the oath of neutrality; some deserted to the American army. Three days after the crossing, St. George wrote to General Brock that he had only 471 militiamen left, and these were in such a state as to be useless to him in the field. The Indians also began to drift away. On July 18, Colonel Henry Procter, who had just replaced St. George at Malden, was able to muster no more than 270 Indian warriors.

To ease his problems of supply, General Hull dispatched foraging expeditions to the settlements on the River Thames and the Chenal Ecarté. On July 14, Colonel Duncan McArthur led a detachment of one hundred fifteen infantry, and twenty mounted men, on a quick march as far as McGregor's Mills (now Chatham) on the Thames. Three days later he was back, followed by a flotilla of boats laden with arms, provisions, and other public stores which had been awaiting shipment to Amherstburg. On July 27, another detachment under Captain Robert Forsyth returned from Baldoon, Lord Selkirk's colony of Highland Scots situated on the Chenal Ecarté near the northeast corner of Lake St. Clair. They had plundered the settlement of its provisions, including nine hundred Merino sheep from Selkirk's farm.

Hull also dispatched probing expeditions down the river road leading to Amherstburg, twenty miles away. On July 16, a report was received that a British force had crossed to the north side of the Canard River, about six miles above Malden. Hull sent Colonel Lewis Cass with three hundred men to investigate, but with orders not to attack. Cass promptly disregarded these orders and drove the enemy from the bridge over the Canard. Hull refused to allow him to retain control of the bridge, exposed as it was to fire from the ship of war *Queen Charlotte* with its seventeen twenty-four pounders, which lay in the Detroit River off the mouth of the Canard. Cass had to withdraw, disgusted with his commander's timidity. Two British picket guards were taken prisoners. Both

ISAAC BROCK

*From J. G. Bourinot,* The Story of Canada (New York, 1896).

were wounded, and one died soon after. These were the first battle casualties of the campaign, and possibly of the war.

During the next week, while Hull waited for the carpenters to construct gun carriages, further clashes occurred at the Canard. Cass and McArthur, the impetuous militia colonels who led the reconnaissance parties, found it difficult to restrain their men or themselves, and additional blood was shed in what were essentially useless operations. On July 28 came the disheartening news of the fall of Fort Michilimackinac, located on the southeastern end of Mackinac Island, which guarded the passage between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. The British command of the upper lakes had prevented Hull from sending any reinforcements to that post, even if he had been in a position to do so, but he neglected even to send it word of the outbreak of hostilities. Lieutenant Porter Hanks had a garrison of but sixty-one officers and men, and was without adequate supplies for a siege.

About forty miles to the northeast of Mackinac Island there was a British fort on St. Joseph's Island, which protected the entrance to the St. Mary's River and Lake Superior. Captain Charles Roberts, its commandant, had a small garrison of forty-six officers and men, but he could draw upon the *voyageurs* and agents of the North West Fur Company, and its numerous Indian allies. By July 15, a week after the receipt of a letter from General Brock directing him to take such measures as he could, Roberts had collected about two hundred Canadian employees of the company and four hundred Indians. With these, and most of his garrison, he set out the following morning for Mackinac Island in a fleet of canoes, accompanied by the company's armed brig *Caledonia*. The landing on Mackinac Island took place in the early morning of July 17, at a point far to the north of Fort Michilimackinac. Dragging a six-pound cannon up an unguarded height which commanded the fort, Roberts called upon Hanks to surrender. Outnumbered ten to one, and unable to reach the cannon on the hill with his own guns, Hanks had no choice but to obey.

The news of the fall of Fort Michilimackinac, which should not have been unexpected, was greatly disturbing to General Hull. "The surrender of Michillimackinac opened the northern hive of Indians," he wrote later, "and they were swarming down in every

direction." He saw that Fort Dearborn, at the southern end of Lake Michigan, could not hope to hold out against the hostile Indians and the British, and he sent word to Captain Nathan Heald, the commandant, to withdraw to Fort Wayne, Indiana. The evacuation of the fort, which began the morning of August 15, ended in disaster. Escorted by a small group of friendly Miami Indians from Fort Wayne, the slender column of fifty-four regulars, twelve militiamen, nine women and eighteen children, encountered a force of some four hundred Potawatomi. In the ensuing fight all were killed or taken prisoners by the savages.

Soon after his arrival in Sandwich, General Hull had sent word to Governor Meigs of Ohio that he must have supplies immediately, or "the army will perish." In response to this plea the governor dispatched Captain Henry Brush from Urbana on July 21, with ninety men, seventy pack horses laden with flour, and three hundred cattle. At the Maumee two companies of militia from Sandusky and Cleveland joined the convoy, which then moved up to the River Raisin. Here Brush learned that Tecumseh's Indians were blocking the road ahead at the mouth of the Detroit River, opposite Amherstburg. He sent word to Hull asking for reinforcements, and settled down to await their arrival.

Hull responded promptly by dispatching Major Thomas Van Horne and two hundred men, with orders to take a back trail that led from the mouth of the Ecorse River through the site of present-day Ypsilanti, thus avoiding the Indians reported to be at Brownstown. Van Horne camped for the night of August 4 at the Ecorse, and the next morning, being unable to find the trail, proceeded down the river road. Just beyond Monguagon (Trenton) a small party of Indians fired on the advance guard, killing two men. Warning came that the enemy was preparing an ambush at Brownstown Creek, but Van Horne began to cross that stream without taking the precaution to send scouts ahead. A sudden burst of fire came from the brush where a group of Indians led by Tecumseh lay hidden. The terrified militia broke and ran, leaving seventeen dead on the field, seven of them officers; the rout did not end until the survivors reached the Ecorse. The Indians lost one of their chiefs, their only casualty during the engagement. Hull's dispatches to

the Secretary of War were captured and delivered to Colonel Procter at Malden.

On the day following the Battle of Brownstown, General Hull held a council of war with his senior officers to determine what should be done. He, as well as they, knew that the invasion of Canada was pointless unless an attempt was made to take Malden. Failure to take it not only left the British in a position to blockade the road between Detroit and the River Raisin at will, but left the way open for an attack on Detroit whenever General Brock could bring in reinforcements from the east. With the capture of Malden the British would lose their only local base of operations for their army and navy, and would be compelled to fall back on Long Point on Lake Erie, 150 miles to the east. A proper fortification at the Maumee would then secure the American communications with Ohio, except from long-range attacks by water which would be much more difficult to make. The favorable conditions resulting from the early desertion of the Canadian militia and Indians had now disappeared. Veteran British reinforcements in small numbers were beginning to arrive at Malden; the militia had recovered; and the Indians were returning to what appeared to be the winning side. With the fall of Michilimackinac a horde of Indians and North West Company men might be expected to descend from the north. In the east the campaigns against Montreal and Niagara had stalled, making it possible for General Brock to turn his attention to the Detroit theater.

Hull no longer had any excuse for delay. The carpenters had at last completed the carriages for the siege guns. A decision was accordingly made to attack Malden at once, although the artillery officers pointed out the difficulty of getting floating batteries past the *Queen Charlotte* and two other armed vessels in the river, or of attempting to bring down the guns by land. A few hours later word was received that Brock was on his way to Amherstburg with reinforcements of British regulars from the Niagara region. Hull immediately abandoned plans for the attack and decided to move the bulk of his force back to Detroit, leaving only a small garrison in a temporary fortification at Sandwich. The protests of the Ohio colonels went unheeded, and the crossing was effected during the early hours of August 8.

As soon as he had arrived back in Detroit Hull made a new attempt to bring up the convoy at the River Raisin. He sent Lieutenant-Colonel James Miller with 280 regulars and more than three hundred militiamen down the road to Frenchtown. The detachment had reached Monguagon, about four miles north of Brownstown, on August 9, when the advance guard was fired on by at least four hundred British and Indians under the command of Captain Adam Muir. This force had crossed from Malden to Brownstown when the American army moved back to Detroit, and had moved up to Monguagon just in time to take up a position in a wooded ravine, with Tecumseh's Indians dispersed in a corn field and in the woods to the left. The Americans pressed forward, driving back the Indians, until they engaged the British line. After a hot engagement that lasted more than half an hour the British began to retire at a run down the road to Brownstown, followed by Colonel Miller and the left wing of the American force. The right wing pursued the fleeing Indians through the forest away from the river, until recalled by Colonel Miller, who had stopped his pursuit of the British in order to reform his forces. The British, who had lost four killed, fifteen wounded, and two missing, did not stop until they reached Brownstown, where they embarked in their boats for Amherstburg. The Indians may have lost as many as forty or fifty killed. The Americans lost twenty killed and sixty wounded.

Miller's victory at the Battle of Monguagon left the way open for a meeting with Brush at the River Raisin, and the bringing of the desperately needed provisions to Detroit. But Miller feared another ambush on the road ahead, and his men were almost without food, having brought only a two days' supply with them. The night was spent in a cleared area near the battlefield, only the wounded being provided with shelter from the heavy rain that began to fall. The next morning Miller sent word to Hull, asking for additional rations as well as boats to evacuate the wounded. Later in the day Colonel McArthur and a detachment arrived with the boats and one day's rations. Miller was now ill, and he made no move to advance to the River Raisin. On August 12, instead of sending more provisions as requested by Miller, Hull directed him to return with his men to Detroit. Late the following day Hull sent out a picked force of four hundred men under McArthur and

Cass, in a last desperate attempt to join forces with Brush. A few hours later General Brock arrived at Malden with reinforcements from the east, prepared to take the offensive.

When Hull began his invasion of Canada, Brock was at Fort George on the Niagara frontier, anxiously awaiting an attack in that quarter. He sent Colonel Procter to replace St. George at Malden, with some additional men from the Forty-first Regiment, and he tried to raise a few companies of local militia and a force of Mohawk Indians from the Grand River, to move down the Thames to his assistance. However, Hull's proclamation, distributed by American agents, had a great effect on the inhabitants. The Indians declared their intention of remaining neutral, and most of the Oxford and Long Point militamen professed to be afraid to leave their families exposed to these uncertain allies. Brock had to content himself with posting a small detachment of militia at Delaware to oppose the American foraging parties on the upper Thames.

From July 27 to August 5 Brock was at York, meeting with an extra session of the legislature, which he had summoned in order to procure troops and supplies. On July 29, he heard the welcome news that Fort Michilimackinac had fallen. At the same time many volunteers were coming forward for service on the Detroit frontier. Relieved now from fear of an early attack at Niagara, and with reinforcements from Lower Canada to protect the eastern part of the province, Brock felt free to turn his attention to the west. Immediately after the prorogation of the legislature he left for Burlington Bay, and from thence proceeded overland to Long Point on Lake Erie. Here he collected a force of two hundred sixty volunteers, one hundred regulars of the Forty-first Regiment, and twenty Indians. With these he set out on August 8 in small boats for Malden, having previously ordered the militia at Delaware to go there by way of the Thames.

The flotilla arrived at Amherstburg about midnight on August 13. It was then that Brock and Tecumseh first met, and came to have a feeling of respect and admiration for each other. The morning after his arrival Brock formed all his available troops into three brigades and moved up to Sandwich, where Procter had begun to erect batteries opposite Detroit. On August 15 he sent Hull a demand that he surrender, under threat of an Indian massacre.

With Hull's refusal the British shore batteries and the guns of two ships began to fire on Detroit. The American shore batteries and two twenty-four pounders in the town returned the fire. A brisk duel ensued that lasted until ten o'clock that night.

Soon after dawn on August 16 the three British brigades, composed of about three hundred thirty regulars and four hundred militia, crossed the river and landed at Springwells. A small detachment of artillerymen with five light guns went with them. Some six hundred Indians under Tecumseh had already crossed during the night and were hidden in the woods about a mile and a half to the left. The British had resumed their bombardment, now aiming at the fort instead of the town, and doing considerable execution among the men and officers of the garrison. Among those killed was Lieutenant Porter Hanks, the unfortunate Michilimackinac commandant, and Dr. James Reynolds, while Dr. Hosea Blood was severely wounded. This bloodshed did nothing to strengthen Hull's determination to resist the British assault, which was progressing with terrifying speed.

Brock had intended to wait in a strong position and compel the Americans to attack him in the open, but on learning that McArthur's party had left for the River Raisin he resolved to assault the fort at once. He knew from the correspondence captured at Brownstown that Hull had lost the confidence of his men, and was desperate. He may have had some indication that Hull would not fight. If so, his advance in the face of the heavy guns loaded with grape, which Hull had placed at an outpost to the west of the fort, was not as reckless as it seemed.

As the British troops marched up the river road, the Indians, who had slipped through the woods behind, began to enter the town. The long British column moved forward against the guns, facing what appeared to be certain destruction. But the waiting artillerymen never received the order to fire; Hull had made up his mind to surrender. His provisions were not sufficient for a lengthy siege, and he had received no word from McArthur and Cass. In their absence he had but 1,060 men fit for duty within the fort. With an exaggerated idea of the number of the Indians, he believed his forces greatly outnumbered. The threat of a general massacre, if he resisted, appalled him. He shrank from the carnage which he

thought could do no more than postpone the inevitable capitulation. A crowning blow was the defection of two companies of Michigan militia. "I now became impatient to put the place under the protection of the British," he explained later; "I knew that there were thousands of savages around us."

The British had advanced to within a mile of the waiting guns when Hull withdrew all his forces within the works, and ordered a flag of truce hoisted. He then sent an officer to Brock to ask for a cessation of hostilities. Two of Brock's aides soon arrived to arrange the terms of surrender, and the articles of capitulation were drawn up and signed. The dejected American soldiers, feeling themselves betrayed by their commander, stacked their arms and marched out of the fort. Shortly after noon the British entered, lowered the American flag and hoisted the Union Jack, to the strains of "God Save the King" and the booming of cannon. Once again after sixty years Detroit was under British control.

Brush's detachment at the River Raisin was included in the terms of surrender, but he refused to acknowledge them and withdrew to Ohio. The terms also included the detachment under McArthur and Cass, which had gone as far as Godfroy's trading post (Ypsilanti) on the Huron River, where Brush had been directed to meet it by way of the back trail. Finding the trail impractical for his convoy, or refusing to take a chance that the Indians would not have blockaded this as well as the river road, Brush had never left Frenchtown. Not finding him at Godfroy's, McArthur and Cass returned on the evening of August 15 to camp about three miles from Detroit, the next day withdrawing some distance farther off. Already deeply involved in a plot to supplant their incompetent commander, they neither went to his support nor informed him of their whereabouts. However justified may have been their lack of confidence in Hull, their conduct helped to bring about the result they feared.

Most of the officers and men of the American regular army were sent to Montreal as prisoners of war, while the militia were allowed to return to their homes on parole. Hull was later exchanged, and was court-martialed for his conduct. Found guilty of cowardice, neglect of duty, and unofficerlike conduct, his sentence of death was remitted by President Madison. There can be no question of his

HULL PONDERS WHETHER TO FIGHT OR SURRENDER

*From Benson J. Lossing,* Our Country, A Household History *(New York, 1878).*

indecisiveness, or of his failure in the moment of crisis, but the fault was as much that of the War Department as his own. Lack of preparation in the years previous to the war, failure to heed his early recommendation for control of the lakes, and to provide support on the Niagara and Montreal fronts, all contributed to the fiasco. Though the result might appear inevitable, a stronger and more energetic man than Hull would have defended Detroit to the last. Brock won glory partly because of Hull's weakness; without that weakness the result could have been a British defeat. Hull was not a coward, but he lacked other qualities necessary for his position as commander of the Northwestern army.

Detroit's quick surrender permitted Brock to return to the Niagara frontier in time to meet the long-delayed American attack there. Leaving Colonel Procter in command in the west, he was back at Fort George by August 24. With an army of fifteen hundred regulars, militia, and Indians, he prepared to defend the Niagara frontier against six thousand militia and regulars under General Stephen Van Rensselaer and General Alexander Smyth. Brock died on October 13 leading his men against the American invaders on Queenston Heights. Major-General Roger Hale Sheaffe was appointed to succeed him in the command of Upper Canada, but he could not replace Brock, one of the very few able commanders engaged during the war on either side.

## GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON AND THE CAMPAIGN OF 1813

The fall of Detroit ended for more than a year American control north of the Maumee River. Colonel Procter, in command on the Detroit frontier, was directed to check any effort on the part of the Americans to establish posts on the Maumee or along Lake Erie, which could form bases for attacks during the winter when the ground was frozen and the roads made passable. Otherwise, he was to take no offensive measures. Events were to prove him unequal to the task of keeping the Americans from the line of the Maumee, but until the latter gained naval control on Lake Erie, Detroit and Malden remained free from attack.

On September 17, 1812, President Madison appointed Governor William Henry Harrison of Indiana, the hero of Tippecanoe and a man of much military experience and ability, to take command of a new Northwestern army. This army had been assembled in Kentucky and Ohio during the latter part of the summer by General James Winchester, another of those elderly and long inactive veterans of the War of Independence whom the War Department was accustomed to place in high command. As a major-general in the Kentucky militia and a brigadier-general in the United States army, Harrison had previously been subordinate to Winchester. At the time of Harrison's appointment both men were in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, Indiana, engaged in a campaign against the hostile Indians of the West.

Harrison's orders were to protect the western frontier, recapture Detroit, and then move against Upper Canada. His plans involved holding the line of the Maumee River from Fort Defiance to the Rapids, where a base (the later Fort Meigs) was to be established for the advance on Detroit. Winchester's army, which was at Fort Defiance at the junction of the Auglaize and the Maumee, was to move eastward down the Maumee to the Rapids, where it would be joined by two other columns advancing from Ohio. One of these would proceed over the road opened by Hull through the Black Swamp; the other down the Sandusky River to Lake Erie and thence along the shore, skirting the eastern end of the swamp. Each column would be separately supplied, which could be more easily done than if the whole force were united. Blockhouse forts were to be built along their routes to protect the communications with Ohio. If all went well an overwhelming force would be collected at the Rapids, with artillery, provisions, and other supplies necessary for the advance on Detroit. British control of the lakes was a problem not yet met, but for the moment, after the harbors and rivers froze over, it might be disregarded.

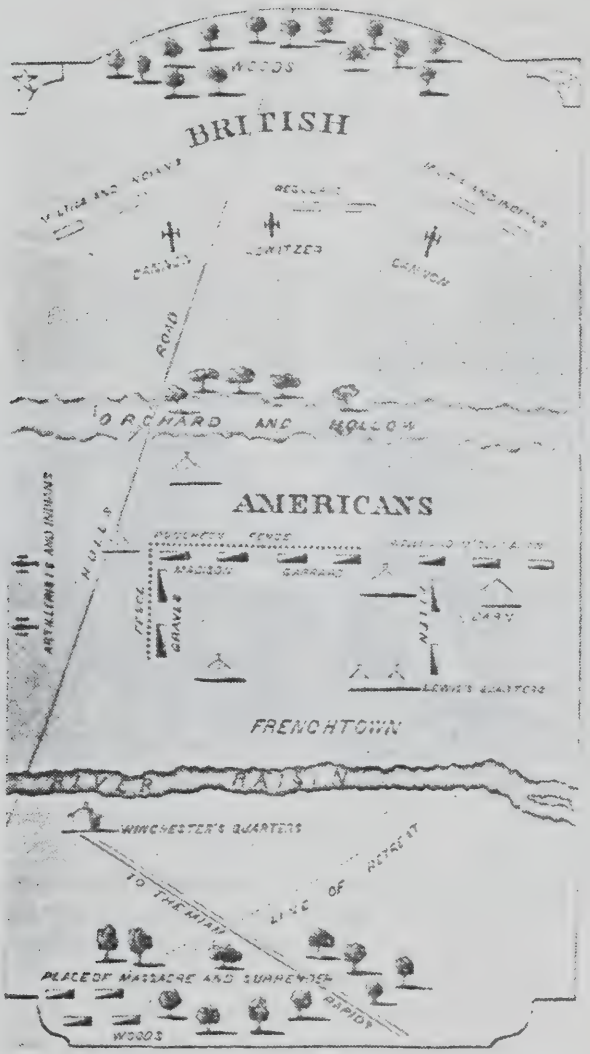
During the remainder of 1812, General Harrison harried the Indians in Ohio and Indiana, burning their villages and destroying their food supplies, while preparations were made for the advance to the Rapids. By the middle of December about fifteen hundred men, chiefly militia from Virginia and Pennsylvania, had assembled at Upper and Lower Sandusky, and General Winchester was in

readiness to march from Fort Defiance. But the utmost exertions of the center column could not enable it to force a way through the Black Swamp, which was still unfrozen. Harrison therefore made a temporary change in his plans. After establishing his headquarters at Upper Sandusky, in order to oversee the preparations in that quarter, he sent word to Winchester to move immediately to the Rapids, and prepare sleds for an attack on Malden, which would be made as soon as the ice on the lake was sufficiently strong.

Acting on these orders Winchester, with thirteen hundred men, marched down the Maumee and arrived at the Rapids on January 10, 1813. A few days later he began to receive messages from the inhabitants of Frenchtown on the River Raisin urging him to come to their relief. The village was guarded only by a small force of British and Indians, who were rounding up all known American sympathizers and sending them to Malden, and threatening to burn the place. A rapid advance from the Rapids would not only insure the safety of Frenchtown, but would prevent the British from shipping to Malden a large quantity of flour and grain stored there. Such were the arguments advanced by the inhabitants, who failed to mention the obvious fact that any force occupying Frenchtown was in grave danger of being cut off by British forces from Amherstburg, only a few miles away across the frozen Detroit River.

Winchester decided to take the risk, and on the morning of January 17 about six hundred sixty men, half of his army, was dispatched to the River Raisin. Under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Lewis the detachment traveled on the ice near the shore of Lake Erie, reaching the mouth of the Raisin that afternoon. Fifty Canadian militiamen and at least two hundred Indians under the command of Major Ebenezer Reynolds opposed them on the north side, but the Americans crossed the frozen river in the face of their fire, forcing them to retreat towards Brownstown. The pursuit was continued for two miles, after which Lewis withdrew his men to Frenchtown. His losses included twelve killed and fifty-five wounded; the British and Indians probably suffered about the same number of casualties.

In response to Lewis' request for reinforcements to hold the place, Winchester dispatched Colonel Wells with about three hundred




BATTLE OF THE RIVER RAISIN—From a contemporary sketch of the movements at Frenchtown.

*From* Lossing, Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812.

RIVER RAISIN MASSACRE

*From Lossing,* Our Country, A Household History.

men, who arrived on January 20. Winchester himself moved up to take command. Most of his army was now in an exposed position forty miles from its base, which was guarded by no more than three hundred men under Brigadier-General John Payne. Lewis' men were encamped on the north bank of the Raisin behind a semicircle of pickets protecting the northern limits of the village. The regulars under Wells now established themselves outside the enclosed area on the right, with no protection except a rail fence. Winchester made his headquarters in the comfortable home of Francis Navarre, more than half a mile away on the south side of the river, and took no steps to improve the inadequate defenses of his men. Some of the militia officers also quartered themselves in houses throughout the village.

The storm broke upon the unsuspecting Americans in the darkness just before dawn, January 22, 1813. Procter had led a force of nearly six hundred regulars and militiamen, with at least as many Indians under the Wyandot chief Roundhead, across the ice from Malden to Brownstown two days before. The next day he advanced to Stony Creek only six miles from the Raisin. The predawn attack that followed caught the Americans unprepared. The regulars behind the rail fence, suddenly aroused from sleep, suffered heavily from the fire of three three-pound cannon and three howitzers in the center of the British line. When Winchester finally arrived from his headquarters on the south side of the Raisin, he ordered the regulars to withdraw to that stream. The Indians now outflanked them on the right, and the retreat became a headlong flight that did not stop at the river. The militia in the picketed area on the left had as yet scarcely lost a man, but they were running short of ammunition. When Winchester, who had been captured by the Indians, ordered the men to surrender in order to prevent a massacre, they obeyed. More than five hundred American soldiers were taken prisoners.

Fearing that General Harrison might arrive at any moment with reinforcements, Procter immediately withdrew to Stony Creek. Some of the prisoners were killed on the march by the infuriated Indians, who had lost heavily in the engagement. About eighty of the wounded were left at Frenchtown without protection. A number of these were slaughtered by the savages during the night and the following day. A few of the survivors were eventually removed

to Amherstburg, the rest were taken to distant Indian villages. More than one hundred Americans lost their lives during the battle or the massacre that followed. The British lost twenty four soldiers killed and 158 wounded, as well as an undetermined number of Indians. Colonel Procter, promoted to general as a result of his victory, won the undying hatred of the American survivors. "Remember the River Raisin" became the war cry of the Kentuckians, a cry that inspired them at the Battle of the Thames where Tecumseh and many of his warriors died.

Harrison had moved up to the Rapids from Sandusky with artillery and several hundred of the militia as soon as he learned of Winchester's dangerous advance to Frenchtown. Unable to prevent the loss of most of Winchester's army, Harrison was forced back on the defensive. A few weeks later he began the construction of Fort Meigs below the Rapids on the Maumee, some twelve miles from the mouth of the river. Fort Stephenson, a less permanent fortification, had already been built at the mouth of the Sandusky River to protect the approaches to Sandusky Bay, as well as the communications between the Maumee and the settled parts of Ohio. This fort also presented an obstacle to any enemy approach by land to Presque Isle (or Erie), Pennsylvania, 150 miles farther east. Here shipbuilders were constructing vessels for a fleet to contest the British control of Lake Erie.

A successful attack on Erie, unguarded until after Lieutenant (later Captain) Oliver Hazard Perry arrived late in March, 1813, would have destroyed the greatest potential danger to the British on the western frontier, and greatly delayed its recurrence. But General Procter delayed, and in April Perry obtained four small guns and some muskets from Pittsburgh, and induced the local commander of the Pennsylvania militia to station five hundred men at Erie. Procter had only a small force of regulars at his disposal, in addition to the militia, and the Indians whom he found difficult to use effectively. The British fleet on the lake was short of supplies and seamen. The American activities on Lake Ontario and at Niagara precluded any hope of assistance from that quarter. When Procter did take the offensive it was against Fort Meigs, which presented a closer and more immediate threat than did Erie.

On April 23, Procter embarked at Amherstburg for the expedi-

OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

From Lossing's Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812

tion against Fort Meigs. Landing on the north bank of the Maumee opposite the fort, he besieged it from May 1 to May 9 with heavy guns. His forces consisted of about twelve hundred regulars and militia, and an equal number of Indians led by Tecumseh and Roundhead. General Harrison held the fort with thirteen hundred men. An American reinforcement of about the same number of men under General Green Clay was moving down the river from Fort Defiance. Its arrival during the siege was the occasion of a costly defeat of a detachment of more than eight hundred Americans under Colonel William Dudley. Drawn into an ambush by the Indians, nearly all were killed or taken prisoners. But the Indians then began to drift away to their villages laden with booty; and the Canadian militiamen became impatient to get back to their farms for the spring planting. Procter was forced to raise the siege and return to Malden.

Sir George Prevost, the commander-in-chief, saw the expediency of an attack on Erie, where the construction of Perry's ships was proceeding rapidly. In answer to Procter's pleas he directed General Francis De Rottenburg, now in command at Niagara, to send reinforcements and supplies to Malden. But De Rottenburg refused to weaken his own forces by doing so and Procter was compelled to confine himself to more limited objectives. He planned an attack on Sandusky, but bowed to the wishes of the Indians and agreed to make another attempt to take Fort Meigs. On July 21 he appeared before that place with about four hundred regulars and militia and one thousand Indians. A week later the siege was raised, many of the Indians having departed for their homes after failing to draw the garrison into an ambush outside the fort. Procter then proceeded by water to the lower Sandusky, followed on shore by the two hundred Indians who remained. Major George Croghan, the commander at Fort Stephenson, refused to evacuate the fort as directed by General Harrison, or to surrender to the British under the usual threats of an Indian massacre. On the afternoon of August 2, after an extensive bombardment by the British artillery and the guns of the gunboats, Procter ordered an assault. It was repulsed with heavy loss to the attackers, who then withdrew to Malden.

In the meantime Perry had completed the construction of two

brigs and three schooners at Erie. By July 23 these were rigged, armed, and ready for service, although men were lacking to man them. They were built of green timber obtained in the vicinity, but the armament and other supplies had to be brought from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, or Washington. A month earlier, as a result of the British withdrawal from the line of the Niagara River, a brig, three schooners, and a sloop left Black Rock where they had been altered and equipped. They escaped the British fleet and arrived at Erie. Perry now had a fleet of sufficient size to challenge the British, as soon as additional crews could be obtained. He was also faced with the problem of getting his two new brigs across the shallow bar at the entrance to the harbor. This could only be done by removing the guns to lighten them, thus leaving them temporarily defenseless against the British vessels watching outside. Fortunately for the Americans, Captain Robert H. Barclay, now in command of the British fleet, sailed off to Long Point, and was absent from June 30 to August 4. This gave Perry just time to get his unarmed vessels, with their hulls lifted by floats, across the bar. When Barclay appeared again the American fleet was in readiness on the lake.

Short of men and provisions, and with an inferior force, Barclay withdrew to Amherstburg to await the completion of his new ship, the *Detroit*. On August 6, Lieutenant Perry put out from Erie, but finding the enemy nowhere in sight returned to take on provisions, as well as supplies for Harrison's army at Sandusky. A few days later Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott arrived with 102 officers and men to help man the ships. On August 12, Perry took his fleet westward, hoping to meet the British fleet or to intercept boats bringing provisions to Amherstburg from Long Point. But Barclay kept his ships moored under the guns of Fort Malden, while the finishing touches were put on the *Detroit*, and Perry established headquarters at Put-in-Bay in the Bass Islands, a few miles north of Sandusky Bay. After discussing with Harrison plans for the destruction of the British fleet and the invasion of Canada, Perry returned from Sandusky to Put-in-Bay with nearly one hundred Kentucky riflemen to complete the manning of his ships.

As soon as the *Detroit* was ready for action, Barclay decided to accept the challenge of the American fleet. By no means a timorous commander, he was urged on by Prevost, who wrote that he had

only to dare to be successful; and there was desperate need at Amherstburg for provisions from the east, which could not be brought up in quantity while Perry's ships were on the watch. Barclay's fleet now consisted of the *Detroit* armed with seventeen long guns and two carronades taken from the ramparts of Fort Malden; the *Queen Charlotte,* seventeen twenty-four pounders; the *Lady Prevost,* thirteen guns; the *Hunter,* eight small guns; and two gunboats armed with one or two guns apiece. Most of the armament on all these vessels consisted of long guns. The opposing American squadron was superior in number and size of vessels, as well as in the caliber of its guns, but most of the latter were carronades. The *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* had eighteen thirty-two pound carronades and two long twelves each; the *Caledonia* (the North West Company's brig captured from the British and refitted at Black Rock) had three guns; six other vessels mounted from one to four guns of varying sizes apiece.

The British fleet was sighted off Put-in-Bay at daybreak of September 10. As it slowly approached, driven by a light wind from the northwest, the American fleet stood out to meet it. Because of the British advantage in long range guns, and the American in carronades, Perry had given orders for his ships to close with the enemy as quickly as possible. Suddenly the wind shifted to the southeast favoring the American ships. Shortly before noon, when the two opposing columns were almost parallel to each other, and the ships had turned to face their designated opponents, the *Detroit* opened fire with her long guns on Perry's flagship, the *Lawrence.* Three of the smaller American vessels supported the *Lawrence* with their long guns as she moved forward to engage the *Detroit.* Soon both ships were lying almost side by side, fighting with every weapon they could bring to bear. Lieutenant Elliott in command of the *Niagara,* instead of closing with the *Queen Charlotte* according to plan, stood off and fired his two long guns at her. The latter ignored her distant assailant and joined in the attack on the *Lawrence.*

By half past two in the afternoon the *Lawrence* was put completely out of action, her guns dismounted and silent and all but twenty of her crew wounded or dead. Perry was determined not to be put out of the fight himself. Leaving the shattered flagship he rowed to the *Niagara,* which had approached within a short distance and

We have met the enemy and they are
Our Ships. Our Brig one
Schooner & one Sloop.

Yours, with great respect and esteem

O H Perry

PERRY'S FAMOUS MESSAGE

A WARTIME CARTOON—The American cartoonist, William Charles, after Perry's victory depicted the British queen asking the king if he would have some more "Perry" (pear cider). The king, referring to the capture of the British vessel, *Boxer*, by the American *Enterprise*, replies that he has not yet recovered from the "Boxing Match."

*From Lossing*, Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812.

was almost untouched. Immediately afterwards the *Lawrence* struck her colors. Perry ordered Elliott to row back to the four schooners in the rear and bring them into battle, while he took command of the *Niagara*. He then bore down on the center of the British fleet, pouring broadsides into the almost helpless *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, as well as the smaller enemy vessels. Soon the whole British fleet surrendered on orders from Barclay, who had been badly wounded while fighting bravely on board the *Detroit*. The British lost forty-one killed and ninety-four wounded; the Americans twenty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded, the great majority of them on the *Lawrence*. "We have met the enemy and they are ours," Perry wrote to Harrison, "two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop."

The American victory made Procter's position on the Detroit River untenable. The way was open for an attack on Fort Malden, whose garrison and heavy guns had been depleted to help service Barclay's fleet. There was also the pressing problem of the food supply. During the past year thousands of Indians had been driven out of Indiana and Illinois as Harrison's forces laid waste their villages and cornfields. Seeking British support, they had gathered in great numbers at Mackinac and elsewhere in the north; many had come down to Amherstburg. At this time it was estimated that the warriors and their families dependent on the government bounty at Malden numbered about fourteen thousand. Their wasteful killing of the inhabitants' cattle, and consumption of other provisions, had nearly exhausted local supplies. Lack of roads made lake transport the only means of bringing in food in any quantity from the east. Now this was cut off by American control of Lake Erie.

By September 26, 1813, Harrison had assembled his forces for the invasion of Canada at Middle Sister Island north of Put-in-Bay. The next day they were landed at Hartley's Point, below Amherstburg, without opposition. Procter was at that moment withdrawing eastward along Lake St. Clair towards the Thames River, his only avenue of escape. He had left Malden on September 24 after burning the public buildings there. Similar destruction was done at Sandwich and Detroit before departing two days later. The American army moved up to Sandwich on September 29, and the

next day Colonel Richard Johnson's mounted regiment of Kentuckians, which had marched from Ohio by land, arrived in Detroit. On October 2, Harrison started in pursuit of Procter with about twenty-five hundred men.

The British army was encamped on the north bank of the Thames a short distance below the site of Chatham. Surprised by the rapid advance of the Americans, which was made possible by a sudden frost and hardening of the muddy road, Procter hastily continued his retreat up the north bank of the river. But Tecumseh and his warriors, having lost all faith in the British commander, decided to make a stand at Chatham on the south, at the mouth of McGregor's Creek. The Americans arrived about noon on October 4, and after a sharp skirmish in which several were killed or wounded on both sides, drove the Indians from two partially demolished bridges over the creek. That night the army encamped at a farm four miles beyond Chatham. The next morning it pressed on, capturing a number of boats laden with Procter's stores which were stranded in the shallow river. Some of them had been set on fire, as had an occasional mill or house filled with arms and provisions.

A few miles farther on the American army forded the Thames and advanced cautiously up the north bank to the site of the village of Thamesville, where the British had spent the night. Here it was learned that Procter was preparing to make a stand three miles beyond. He had selected a position between the river and a small swamp, where large beech trees, free of underbrush, offered but slight protection for his 850 regulars and militia. Beyond the small swamp on the north was a much larger one which ran at a slight angle to the river, approaching it most nearly at the British lines. Tecumseh's Indians, about eight hundred in number, occupied the less open ground between the two swamps, and were also extended westward along the edge of the larger one to outflank the Americans. This position was about a mile and a half to the west of Moraviantown, where Procter had planned to make his stand, and where he had left six small cannon. The one cannon that he had with him was without ammunition.

When the American forces arrived and were drawn up in battle order, a clear bugle call rang through the forest and the first brigade of the Kentucky mounted regiment moved forward against

the British infantry. Momentarily slowed by a volley from the enemy lines, the horsemen soon began an impetuous charge that carried all before it. Gaining the rear of the British the Kentuckians forced them to surrender. Procter did not wait to see the outcome, but fled eastward with his personal staff and a few mounted men. This action lasted but a few minutes, and was all over before that on the American left had more than begun. Here Colonel Richard Johnson, in command of the second brigade of Kentuckians, was severely wounded as he rode at the head of twenty of his men to draw the enemy fire. The rest of the brigade dismounted to meet the furious onrush of the Indians, and the fighting raged for some time. The Indians along the edge of the large swamp attacked the first line of American infantry, which had been drawn up in position to guard the left flank. Some impression was made on the infantry, until the reserve troops under Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky poured in a sharp fire, and some of Colonel Richard Johnson's men gained the rear of the Indians. Tecumseh had been slain at the beginning of the fight, possibly by Johnson, although there are eight or ten accounts each naming a different person. His surviving warriors now fled into the swamp pursued by the vengeful Kentuckians, who had not forgotten the massacre of the River Raisin.

Thirty-three Indians were found dead on the field, and others must have been killed in the retreat. The American loss was seven killed and twenty-two wounded, five of whom died of their wounds. The British lost twelve killed, thirty-six wounded, and six hundred prisoners; as well as all their artillery, ammunition wagons, small arms, and personal property. Procter with eighteen officers and 228 men eventually made his way to Burlington Heights at the head of Lake Ontario, where General John Vincent had retreated from the Niagara frontier on hearing of the defeat. Procter was court-martialed in December of the following year, and found guilty on several counts of bad leadership. He was publicly reprimanded and suspended from rank and pay for six months. Like Hull, he had proved unequal in the crisis.

THE DEATH OF TECUMSEH—One of several artists' conceptions of this event.

*From Henry M. Utley and Byron M. Cutcheon,* Michigan, As a Province, Territory and State *(New York, 1906).*

## STALEMATE ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Harrison had destroyed Procter's army and broken the most effective Indian resistance in the west. Control of the Detroit frontier was to remain securely in American hands until the end of the war. But Harrison knew that he could not continue his advance across the southern peninsula of Upper Canada. There was nothing but a trail through the forest separating Moraviantown and Delaware, over which his heavy baggage could not pass. The difficulty of supplying a large army would have been almost insurmountable. Logic seemed to dictate withdrawal to the Detroit, whence the army could be transported by way of Lake Erie to the Niagara frontier. Moraviantown was plundered and burned to the ground, partly in revenge for the massacre of the River Raisin, partly as a precaution against its use by the British during the coming winter. On October 7, Harrison began the withdrawal of his forces to Sandwich.

On October 19, Harrison and Perry left the Detroit with a flotilla of ships transporting thirteen hundred men, bound for Niagara. Colonel Lewis Cass was left in command on the Detroit frontier; ten days later the President appointed him governor of Michigan. American communications were now secure from Detroit to Sackett's Harbor at the eastern end of Lake Ontario. When Fort Gratiot was constructed at the head of the St. Clair River the following May, any British water transport was cut off between the Thames River and the British-held Fort Michilimackinac. Harrison had planned an expedition against that post before his departure from Detroit, but lack of provisions and the lateness of the season forced him to give it up. It was not until the following summer that an attempt was made to recapture Fort Michilimackinac.

In spite of their successes on the Detroit and Niagara frontiers, the American forces were never able to drive the British from the western end of Lake Ontario. Raids on Long Point and on York were made from across the lakes, but the northern shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario remained in British hands. The Thames River became a sort of no-man's land subject to constant raids conducted by both sides, although the Americans exercised a general

control west of Moraviantown and the British from Delaware eastward. A few weeks after the Battle of the Thames, the British established a small post at Delaware to check the inroads of American light horsemen, who rode far up the river on foraging expeditions, while administering the oath of neutrality to the inhabitants. Delaware also served as a base from which British patrols ranged down the river as far as Lake St. Clair.

During the early morning of December 15, 1813, one of these patrols surprised and captured a detachment of thirty-nine American officers and men who were sleeping in a farm house a few miles below Chatham. This post was intended as a counterpart to that at Delaware, but it was never reconstituted. Cass sent a large force to the Thames in an effort to intercept the British. It returned to Sandwich on finding the enemy had already departed. A few days later Cass left for Albany to give evidence in the trial of General Hull, leaving Colonel Anthony Butler in temporary command at Detroit. Butler sent frequent detachments to the Thames to purchase grain and cattle and to oppose the British patrols.

Late in January, 1814, a small group of mounted militia, led by a former resident of Delaware who had deserted to Hull, raided the post at Delaware. This force captured several Canadian officers and men and burned some buildings before retreating down the river. It was probably the success of this raid that induced Butler to send out Captain Andrew H. Holmes of the Twenty-fourth Regiment, with one hundred eighty regulars and Michigan militia, with orders to strike at Delaware or Port Talbot, a small settlement on Lake Erie a few miles to the south. The detachment set out on February 21, carrying two six-pound cannon, through the roadless forest along Lake Erie. Holmes hoped to preserve secrecy by taking this route until he reached the western end of the Talbot Road a few miles from Port Talbot. But the forest and swamp forced him to abandon his artillery at a point opposite the mouth of the Thames. He continued to Rondeau Bay, southeast of Chatham, where he was joined by eighty Michigan Rangers who had been pursuing a group of Canadian militia. With these he decided to carry out an attack on Delaware, abandoning his designs against Port Talbot.

Crossing to the Thames, the detachment rode rapidly through the Longwoods, the forty miles of forest that lay between Moraviantown

and Delaware. Fifteen miles from his destination Holmes learned that Captain James Basden was approaching with a force of two hundred forty British regulars, militia, and Indians. He thereupon retreated to a creek three miles to the east of the present village of Wardsville, and took up a strong position on the west side of a deep ravine, which he protected by a breastwork of logs on three sides. Basden arrived on March 4 to send his regulars storming up the ice-covered slope in front, while the Indians and militia attacked from either side. The result was a defeat for the British, who were forced to retire with a loss of two officers and twelve men killed, two prisoners, and fifty-one wounded, of whom five or six died within a few days. The American loss in this "Battle of the Longwoods" was slight, but Holmes immediately retreated down the river. His objective had been accomplished. The alarmed British evacuated Delaware and moved their advance post back to Oxford, thirty-five miles farther to the east.

Even here the American raiders, led by renegade Canadians, sought them out. In April, three scouts surprised a militia officer in bed at Oxford and brought him bound to Detroit. Parties of American horsemen searched along the river for other inhabitants who were active in the British cause. On May 20, Port Talbot on Lake Erie was raided by a party of thirty mounted riflemen. In July and August, raids were made on Oxford and Port Talbot, during which much private property was destroyed. The western part of Upper Canada was being devastated as far as Long Point and the Grand River.

At this time a determined effort was made to capture Fort Michilimackinac, and to cut the British line of communication between Toronto and the Northwest at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River on Georgian Bay. On July 12, an expedition commanded by Major George Croghan entered Lake Huron, having been delayed for more than a week by contrary winds after leaving Detroit. About the same time a British expedition from Fort Michilimackinac left for Prairie du Chien where the Americans had recently completed Fort Shelby, which commanded the upper Mississippi and the mouth of the Wisconsin River. The British took the fort on July 19, renaming it Fort McKay, and kept it until the peace treaty at the end of the war included it in the territory returned to the Ameri-

cans. One day later Croghan arrived at St. Joseph Island with more than seven hundred men on board five ships of the Lake Erie squadron. Finding the fort there deserted, he burned it and sent Andrew H. Holmes, now a major, with a detachment to destroy the property of the North West Company at Sault Ste Marie. When this had been accomplished Croghan sailed for Mackinac Island, which was reached on August 4. A landing was made on the west side of the island, but as the Americans advanced towards Fort Michilimackinac they found themselves opposed by a force of several hundred British regulars, militia, and Indians, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert McDouall. The ensuing battle ended with a victory for the British, who were in a good defensive position and suffered little loss. On the American side Major Holmes and twelve privates were killed, and three officers and forty-eight men wounded.

Giving up the attempt to take Fort Michilimackinac, Croghan sent part of his force back to Detroit and sailed for Georgian Bay with three companies of regulars on board the *Tigris*, the *Scorpion*, and the *Niagara*. On August 13, he anchored off the mouth of the Nottawasaga River. Some distance up the river lay the British schooner *Nancy*, protected by a blockhouse and a small British garrison under the command of Lieutenant Miller Worsley. The next day American howitzers were set up on shore and began to shell the fort. The garrison soon retired up the river, leaving the *Nancy* in flames. Croghan burned the blockhouse and left for Detroit on board the *Niagara*, having decided that the position was too exposed to be held. The other two vessels remained to patrol the area and to cut British communications with Mackinac and Sault Ste Marie.

Lieutenant Worsley had his revenge. Making his way by canoe to Fort Michilimackinac, he obtained four small boats and a number of soldiers, with which he carried out the daring exploit of capturing the American vessels. On the night of September 3, the *Tigris* was boarded off Drummond Island. It was taken with a small loss on both sides, as was the *Scorpion* two nights later when it anchored near its sister ship, not suspecting that it was in enemy hands. With these two armed vessels the British had a navy on Lake Huron which was able to keep open their communications between Lake Ontario and Mackinac.

On October 9, Brigadier-General Duncan McArthur arrived at Detroit from Ohio with six hundred mounted Kentucky volunteers and seventy Indians, in answer to Governor Cass' appeal for reinforcements. McArthur had first planned an expedition against the hostile Potawatomi villages in southwestern Michigan, but had been forced to give it up because of lack of volunteers, provisions, and naval vessels. Upon his arrival at Detroit he decided to lead his men eastward through Upper Canada, to destroy the mills in the vicinity of the Grand River and Burlington Heights, and thus lay waste British resources. He also planned an attack on the British position at Burlington, as a diversion in favor of the American forces under Major-General George Izard at Fort Erie.

On October 23, McArthur set out from Detroit with the force that he had brought from Ohio, reinforced by fifty mounted Michigan militiamen. He advanced up the Michigan side of Lake St. Clair with the announced intention of attacking the Indians of the Saginaw Bay region. On October 27 he crossed the St. Clair River into Canada and occupied the tiny settlement of Baldoon. After waiting here four days until boats arrived from Detroit to ferry the detachment across Big Bear Creek, McArthur proceeded along the east branch of that stream (now the River Sydenham) until he was opposite Moraviantown, when he crossed to the Thames. Moving up the river he reached Oxford by November 4. Here considerable public property was destroyed. Two days later he was at the Grand River at Brantford. The river was then too high to be forded, and as it was reported that a force of British regulars from Burlington was approaching to intercept him, McArthur left part of his men to oppose it at Brantford and turned back with the rest to destroy Malcolm's Mills near Burford. Here he defeated a body of militia; while the detachment at the Grand River was equally successful in its clash with the regulars. McArthur reported his losses in both engagements as one killed and six wounded. The British lost eighteen killed, nine wounded, and about one hundred twenty prisoners.

Word now reached McArthur that General Izard had left Canada on November 5 after destroying Fort Erie. Abandoning his plan to proceed to Burlington Bay he turned southward to Dover, near Long Point. Here he destroyed five mills, a number of houses

and much other property, and took several prisoners. The return to Detroit was made by way of the Talbot Road to a point south of Delaware, and thence down the Thames River. This was the most devastating raid of the war, as well as the last action of any importance on the Detroit frontier before the signing of the treaty of peace on December 24, 1814.

The Treaty of Ghent provided for the return by both countries of all conquered territory. On July 1, 1815, Fort Malden passed into British hands; on July 18 American troops under Colonel Butler occupied Fort Michilimackinac. The British North American provinces had kept their independence of the United States, but the Ohio Valley was finally lost to them. For the United States the War of 1812 completed what the War of Independence had begun: her boundaries were confirmed, and her status as an independent nation was fully recognized by Great Britain. Despite her failures in Canada her national pride was aroused by victories on the Thames, on Lake Erie, on the Atlantic, and at New Orleans. For the Indians the war was a complete defeat. Tecumseh was dead, and his dream of preserving the lands and ways of his people was ended forever.

A MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE PEACE OF 1814

*From Lossing,* Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812.

## RECOMMENDED READING

The most recent and detailed book on the western phase of the War of 1812 is Alec R. Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (East Lansing, 1958). Its bibliography contains most of the important primary and secondary materials. Not included is A. T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812,* 2 volumes (Boston, 1919), which has been found very useful in preparing the present article; and Glen Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots, A Popular Account of the War of 1812,* 2 volumes (New York, 1954). Among the books listed by Gilpin the following will be found especially useful: Francis F. Beirne, *The War of 1812 (New York, 1949);* Charles P. Lucas, *The Canadian War of 1812* (Oxford, 1906); Robert B. McAfee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country* (Lexington, 1816); Milo M. Quaife, editor, *War on the Detroit—The Chronicles of Thomas Verchères de Boucherville and The Capitulation by an Ohio Volunteer* (Chicago, 1940); and John Richardson, *The War of 1812,* edited by A. C. Casselman (Toronto, 1902).

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Picture Kits:

No. 1: *Indians in Michigan* (1962). $1.00 Eighteen reproductions of pictures relating to Michigan Indians.

Miscellaneous:

Brown, Alan S., ed., *Classroom Guide for United States and Michigan History* (1963). 38 pp. $0.50 (free to teachers of Michigan history).

*A History of Michigan in Paintings.* A series of paintings on major events and topics in Michigan history by Robert Thom. On the back of the full-color, sixteen-by-eleven-inch reproductions of each painting is a text by F. Clever Bald relating the history of the painting's subject matter. Available in several sets of four reproductions each, at $1.00 per set.

Dunbar, Willis F. *Michigan Historical Markers* (available July, 1967). $2.00. Contains the texts of all markers erected by the Commission.

Motion Picture Films:

Four 16 mm., black-and-white, motion picture, sound films, produced and narrated by Jim Culver of station WMSB, Michigan State University, show the tools and methods used by Michigan's lumbermen in the great lumbering era. The films are from eight to twelve minutes in length. The four films, if bought at one time, are available at $175.00.

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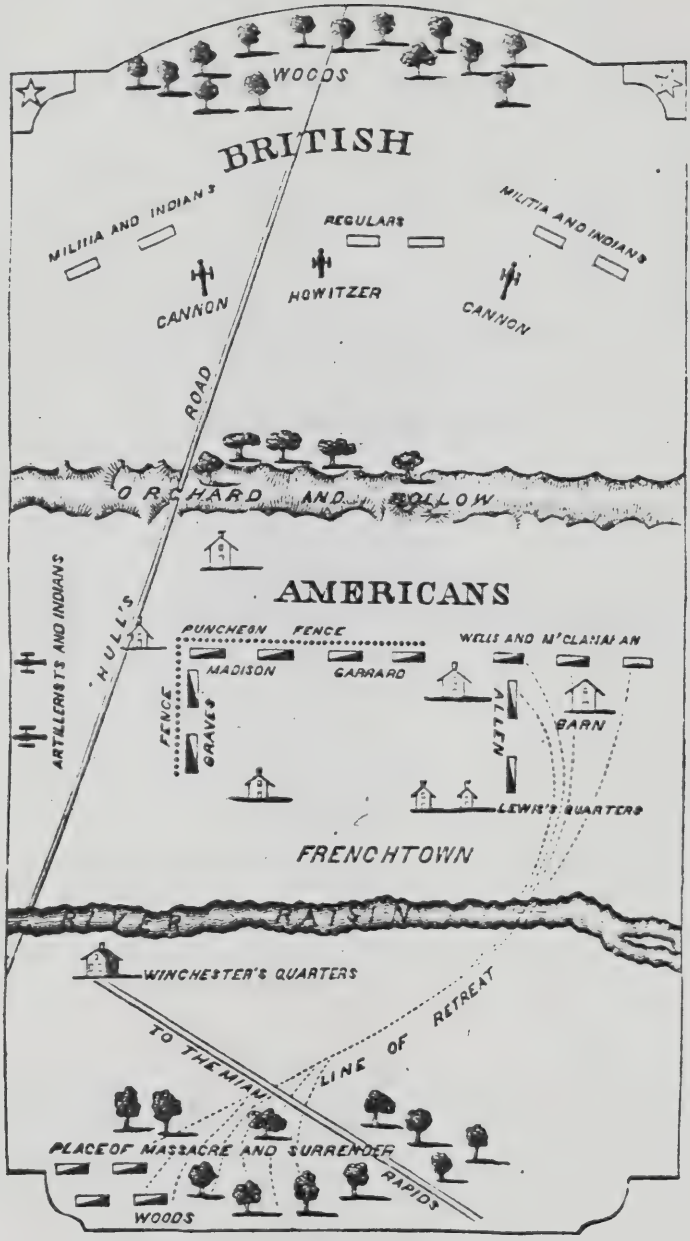


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